

ABCOO11

Age 14

## SHOOTING STAR

Anzac Day is a very important day to a lot of Australians. The attack on Gallipoli was one of the worst military losses that Australia has suffered and Anzac Day is a way of paying respect to the fallen heroes that lay buried at Gallipoli.

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Every Anzac Day we say these words to pay tribute to our fallen Australians.

There are so many stories of heroism arising from war, but I want to tell the story of one largely unknown hero.

The Anzacs landed at night on the western side of the peninsula. Due to a navigational error, they were put ashore one mile north of their intended landing point. The original spot they were meant to land on was a flat plain but instead they were faced with the most foreboding landscape with steep hills and jagged rock lines which gave the Turkish the immediate advantage of having heavily fortified high ground.

Before the war, Australians had no real international reputation but quickly became known for their tenacity, mateship and ingenuity and many legends were born but none so deserving of legend status as Trooper W.E. Sing, known as Billy. Billy Sing would become known by nearly every Anzac and Turk who fought at Gallipoli.

It was only because of his prowess with a gun that Billy was even accepted as a soldier, given the prejudice against Chinese people at the time. Many volunteers were knocked back simply because of their ethnic background. Billy was a sharp shooter from a very young age and was the local rifle club champion at about the time of the outbreak of World War 1. He was driven by the deaths of his brothers in arms who had been picked off one by one by Turkish snipers. This traumatic experience helped to make him a cool, calm and deadly sniper. Billy became a very popular man in the Anzac army. Squadron Leader Hugh Dolan said that "Billy Sing is like a modern rock star. Everyone in Anzac knows him. In fact, several generals and even an admiral go up to the frontline to watch him shoot."

But with his growing popularity in the Australian army he was starting to become a nuisance to the Turks. So much so that they assigned their fiercest assassin to the job of killing him. The diggers called him "Abdul the Terrible". Sing's other remarkable talent was stealth but he had a distinctive

look which worked against him. He was a short dark man with jet black hair and a goatee beard and that image was etched into Abdul's brain. Finally Abdul had Sing in his sights but just at that moment Sing's sidekick spotter saw Abdul. Sing raised his rifle, eyeballing through his sight, a man with a weapon aimed straight back at him. In a split second he pulled the trigger and saw the marksman drop. Billy Sing said "he who hesitates is lost."

Billy Sing won the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry at Anzac and also the Belgian Croix de Guerre after combat in France. He suffered what would now be called post-traumatic stress disorder and never really recovered despite surviving the war and attempting to resettle back home. Few people will have heard of Billy Sing but he has been acknowledged as one of Australia's great war heroes.

Australian folk law has been written with stories like this, and our international image is now cemented as being rugged and tough. More importantly our Anzac image provides motivation for our present and future soldiers.

It can sometimes seem strange to glorify war and even stranger to celebrate one of Australia's greatest losses, but Australia now has a global reputation as a modern country that prizes equality, freedom and a fair go for all. It must be remembered that these ideas are a privilege and cannot be continued without men and women who are willing to defend them.

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